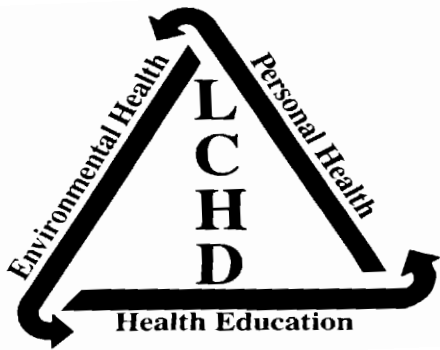


MEDIA RELEASE



Date: January 2, 2025

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)

Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"January is National Radon Action Month"

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department is encouraging residents to test the radon level in their home. Radon is a radioactive gas that occurs naturally in most soil. As radon travels through the soil, it can easily move through small spaces in a foundation and enter a building, where it becomes trapped and accumulates in the air.

Radon has no taste, smell, or color. Testing is the only way to find out if there is a dangerous level of radon in your home. The best time to test for radon is during cold weather when windows and doors are closed.

Most radon exposures occur in the home. When people breathe in radon, it damages the lungs, which can cause lung cancer. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer after cigarette smoking. Radon can be found throughout Illinois and levels can vary from one home to another, even in the same neighborhood. It's estimated more than 1,160 people in Illinois develop radon-related lung cancer each year according to the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA).

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established the radon action level at 4 picocuries per liter of air (4 pCi/L). At or above this level, it is recommended that corrective measures be taken to reduce indoor radon levels. Radon mitigation is the only effective way to reduce levels and decrease the risk of lung cancer. The most common radon reduction system involves the installation of a vent pipe and fan, which draws air from underneath a building and displaces it outside. The cost of a system varies depending on the reduction method chosen and building size. Radon is a preventable health threat through testing and mitigation.

According to a study conducted by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA), 45 percent of homes tested for radon in Illinois had levels at or above the EPA action level of 4.0 picoCuries per liter (pCi/L). In addition, per the IEMA Public Radon Dashboard, the average radon measurement in LaSalle County is 7/pCi/L. "Testing for radon is the only way to know if your family is at risk. I encourage all homeowners in LaSalle County to pick up a free radon test

-more-

kit so they know their home's level" said Jennie Osborn, Director of Environmental Health at LaSalle County Health Department. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) recommends you test your home for radon every two years.

In 2024, LaSalle County Health Department gave out 202 test kits. One hundred forty (140) of those test kits have been submitted for analysis, for a 70.0% usage rate. One hundred ten (110) have produced valid results, with fifty-three (53) having a result above 4.0 pCi/L. The average result of the kits analyzed in 2024 is 6.56 pCi/L.

LaSalle County Health Department, through a grant from the IEMA, has free radon test kits available to residents of LaSalle County. Test kits can be picked up at the health department during regular business hours (Mon.-Fri., 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at 717 E. Etna Road in Ottawa. A staff member will assist you with the instructions on using the test kit, as well as provide information regarding radon, radon measurement, and radon mitigation. Additionally, should your radon test results show a high level of radon in your home, the health department can provide you with a list of licensed radon measurement professionals and licensed radon mitigation professionals for follow-up. Call the LaSalle County Health Department at (815) 433-3366, for more information on radon test kits.

Additional Resources:

Visit <https://www.radon.com/instructions/> to view a testing kit instructional video.

IEMA Public Radon Dashboard

<https://ilema.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/93e4f4824a4046b48d1f35b7226069a8>

For additional information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/radon>.

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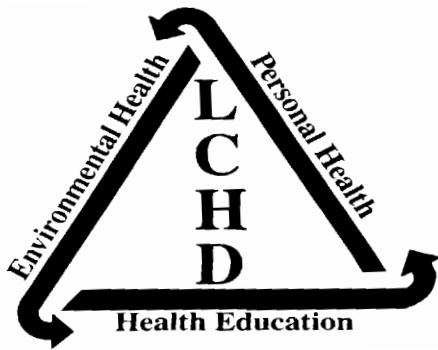
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www.lasallecountyil.gov

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: January 2, 2025
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ex 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ex. 74315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"January is Cervical Cancer Month"

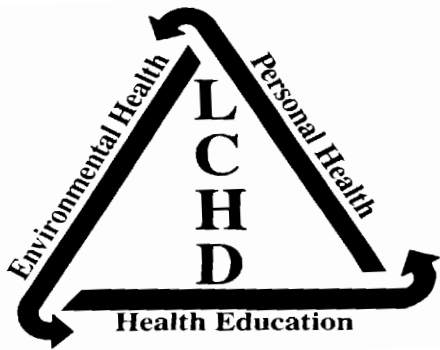
OTTAWA, IL—In recognition of Cervical Cancer Awareness Month, the LaSalle County Health Department is urging female residents to get screened for cervical cancer. We encourage women over the age of 21 to be tested for cervical cancer. The goal is to eradicate cervical cancer in Illinois by women taking charge and getting screened. During 2024 an estimated 13,820 women in the United States were diagnosed with cervical cancer, according to the State of Illinois. The most common age at diagnosis is 50 years old. Cervical cancer, when caught early, is nearly 100 percent curable.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) reports that between 60 and 80 percent of American women with newly diagnosed invasive cervical cancer have not had a Pap smear in the last five years and /or may have never had one. Cervical cancer is one of the most common types of cancer worldwide and one of the most preventable and treatable when detected early. In addition to increasing awareness of cervical cancer there are some preventative steps that women can take. Studies have shown, regular exercise, a healthy diet, routine screenings and getting the cervical cancer vaccine to help prevent Human Papilloma Virus (HPV), decreases the risk for cervical cancer. Licensed HPV vaccines for females and males are available. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 11 or 12 year old girls and boys begin the HPV vaccine series. (Vaccination can begin at age 9.) The vaccination series must be completed by age 45. HPV vaccination is offered at LaSalle County Health Department by appointment and those who are interested in vaccination or want more information can call the Health Department.

The LaSalle County Health Department has an Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP) available which can pay for Pap smear tests for LaSalle and Grundy County women, ages 21-64 who have no insurance or who have high deductibles regardless of income. We invite and encourage anyone who needs more information on cervical cancer and the importance of Pap Smear tests, the IBCCP program, or the cervical cancer vaccines to contact the Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov



MEDIA RELEASE



Date: February 3, 2025

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Leslie Dougherty (#74314) or Jenny Barrie (#74315)

Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

OTTAWA, IL – National Wear Red Day is Friday, February 7, 2025. Together, we can wear red to raise awareness about cardiovascular disease and help save lives. Why? Because losing even one woman to cardiovascular disease is too many.

February is American Heart Month, a month to spread awareness about the importance of heart health. Heart disease is the number one killer of women in Illinois, and the U.S. While heart disease has traditionally been seen as a “man’s disease” one in three women dies of heart disease each year. Women are also more likely than men to exhibit signs of heart attack such as shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting or back and jaw pain. Heart attacks are life and death emergencies where every second counts so we encourage people to know their risks. Factors that may increase your chances of getting heart disease include:

- High Blood Cholesterol
- High Blood Pressure
- Diabetes
- Being Overweight
- Family history of early heart disease
- Age (55 or older for women)
- Being physically inactive
- Smoking

Some steps you can take to decrease your risks of heart disease is to know your numbers when it comes to cholesterol and blood pressure. In addition, controlling your weight, being physically active and decreasing your stress level can also have added benefits.

If you experience any of the following symptoms, do not wait before calling for help. Call 911 or get to the hospital right away if you experience any of the following:

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Shortness of breath
- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Sudden dizziness or lightheadedness
- Unusual upper body pain (arms, back, jaw)
- Skipped heartbeats

- Unusual or unexplained fatigue

For more information about heart disease, contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov.

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: March 12, 2025
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Phone: (815) 433-3366
Leslie Dougherty (ex 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ex 74315)

For Immediate Release

OTTAWA, IL -- The LaSalle County Health Department would like to announce that World TB Day is Monday, March 24th. This is the 143rd anniversary of Robert Koch's discovery of the TB bacillus. When Koch announced his discovery on March 24, 1882 in Berlin, Germany, tuberculosis was responsible for the death of one of every seven people living in Europe and the United States.

World TB Day 2025's theme is, "Yes! We Can End TB: Commit, Invest, Deliver'." TB is still a life-threatening problem, and it impacts people across the United States. TB knows no borders, and people in the United States are suffering from TB. The theme's design is to build public awareness that tuberculosis today remains an epidemic in much of the world causing the deaths of several million people each year. The disruptions caused by the pandemic have led to increased mortality from TB, decreased the number of people diagnosed and treated for TB, and dangerously affected the rights of people with TB. The general symptoms of TB disease include feeling sick or weak, weight loss, fever and night sweats. TB of the lungs causes the general symptoms plus coughing, sometimes producing blood, and chest pain.

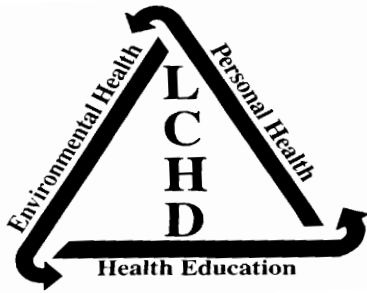
TB is caused by an organism called *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. When a person with active TB disease coughs or sneezes, tiny particles containing *M. tuberculosis* may be expelled into the air. If another person inhales air that contains these particles, transmission from one person to another may occur. However, not everyone infected with the TB germ becomes sick; as a result, two TB related conditions exist; latent TB infection (LTBI) and active TB disease -- both of which are treatable and curable. There are an estimated 13 million persons in the United States with latent TB infection, and about 10% of these infected individuals will develop TB disease at some point in their lives. TB is not a disease of the past; TB can infect anyone.

Each day, over 3400 people lose their lives to TB and close to 30,000 people fall ill with this preventable and curable disease. To find out more about TB, or to see about getting tested for a possible TB exposure, contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov.

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: April 2, 2025
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“LaSalle County Health Department Recognizes National Public Health Week”

OTTAWA, IL - During the first full week of April each year, the American Public Health Association (APHA) brings together communities across the US to observe National Public Health Week. National Public Health Week, with the theme “It Starts Here,” will be observed April 7-13, 2025. Public Health serves as an invisible shield of protection to promote and protect the health of people in the communities where they live, learn, work, and play for generations to come. The APHA states “public health starts with each of us making a difference in our homes and communities. It’s how the places we live; work and play affect our well-being. It’s the way we are all stronger—and healthier—together through the efforts of organizations like the American Public Health Association and others that advocate for healthy communities.”

The LaSalle County Health Department is a Certified Local Health Department that provides clinical and environmental services through the operation of various programs, services and partnerships for the last 38 years. The Health Department touches every county resident some way or another in their daily lives. Programs operated by the department monitor your drinking water and the food you eat, immunize adults and children to protect them from diseases, provide maternal and child healthcare services to pregnant women, infants and children with the goal of improving health outcomes, and promote overall wellness of the community

As a reminder, here are a few of the programs and services the Health Department offers on a regular basis. Citizens are encouraged to call and speak with a staff member for additional information and questions.

- Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP) – The IBCC Program provides education on women’s health with an emphasis on breast and cervical health. Mammograms, Pap Smears and diagnostic screenings are provided at no charge to all women ages 21—64, who are uninsured, underinsured, or have a high deductible. Our IBCCP staff are available to answer eligibility questions and enroll qualified women.
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)– The mission of the LaSalle County WIC program is to improve the health status of women, infants, and children; to reduce the incidence of infant mortality, premature births and low birth weights; and to aid in the development of children. This program serves income eligible pregnant, post-partum, breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age five years. The WIC program provides health screening, nutrition education and counseling, and supplemental foods including formula for infants. Evening appointments are offered the 1st Monday, 3rd Wednesday, and 2nd Thursday of every month.
- Family Case Management Program (FCM) provides outreach, comprehensive case management, and support

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services to prenatal women, infants and children. The primary objective of the program is to reduce infant mortality by ensuring early and consistent prenatal care for women throughout their pregnancy. Education on a healthy pregnancy is ongoing and individually structured to meet the needs of the client. After the baby is born, FCM staff assure that the infants and children are receiving periodic well baby/child check-ups and immunizations.

- Low-Cost Pregnancy Testing is available on a walk-in basis Monday through Friday from 8:00am-4:00pm.
- Childhood Blood Lead levels can cause permanent neurological damage in children and to fetuses in pregnant moms. The Personal Health division staff offer blood lead level screenings to clients in all of our programs who are eligible for testing. Clients with confirmed elevated blood lead levels will also be offered case management services, home inspections, and necessary referrals. Clients will be required to bring their insurance card for billing purposes (no insurance, low-cost option offered). Appointments are encouraged; however, they are not required.
- The Blood Pressure Monitoring Program is open to anyone wants their blood pressure checked and is followed up with education on control measures including nutrition, physical activity, smoking cessation and prescription medications. The program operates on a walk-in basis Monday through Friday from 8:00am-4:00pm.
- Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) testing includes HIV, Syphilis, Hepatitis C, Chlamydia, and Gonorrhea. If you feel you should be tested or have questions regarding your risk factors, our communicable disease nurse is available to answer questions in a confidential setting. A reactive result on an HIV, Syphilis, or Hepatitis C screening test, will need a confirmatory test. Appointments are encouraged.
- Childhood and adult immunizations Stay up-to-date on getting recommended vaccines. Low cost or insurance billing options available. Please call the Health Department to schedule an appointment. (Includes RSV and COVID-19 vaccinations)
- Flu Vaccinations are available at the Health Department on a walk-in basis Monday through Friday from 8:00am-4:00pm.
- Foreign Travel Recommendations LaSalle County residents anticipating foreign travel are advised to contact LaSalle County Health Department for recommendations on international travel. Residents will be provided with detailed information specific to their region of travel. This includes vaccine recommendations, which LaSalle County Health Department offers. Excludes yellow fever.
- Food Sanitation Program the goal of this program is the reduction of foodborne illness through education to food service operators and consumers regarding safe food handling practices. All food service establishments are classified into risk categories based upon the type of menu served, the type of population served, the amount of food handling and/or the procedures of food handling being performed. Food establishments are inspected to ensure compliance with food safety rules and regulations.
- Cottage Food Operations to operate as a cottage food operation, you must register with the local health department where you reside. Contact our Environmental Health Division to learn more about how to start a cottage food business in your home, find out which food are allowed to be produced and packaged, where you can sell your food and how to get registered.

- Free Radon Test Kits – The Health Department, through a grant from the IEMA, has free radon test kits available to residents of LaSalle County. Test kits can be picked up at the health department during regular business hours (Mon.-Fri., 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at 717 E. Etna Road in Ottawa. A staff member will assist you with the instructions on using the test kit, as well as provide information regarding radon, radon measurement, and radon mitigation. Additionally, should your radon test results show a high level of radon in your home, the health department can provide you with a list of licensed radon measurement professionals and licensed radon mitigation professionals for follow-up.
- Free Larvicide to Property Owners – The Health Department, through a grant, offers larvicide to property owners looking to reduce mosquito breeding sites. With West Nile virus season right around the corner, property owners are encouraged to pick up a package of NATULAR® DT. NATULAR® DT, is a mosquito larvicide that controls larvae of mosquitoes for up to 60 days. Manufactured by Clarke, Natular® DT is an easy-to-use, bi-layer tablet that prevents mosquito breeding in standing water sites around yards. The larvicide can be picked up at the Health Department (717 Etna Rd. Ottawa –8:00 a.m.-4:30p.m.). Each package contains 12 tablets. At this time, **supplies are limited to one per household.**

The LaSalle County Health Department will also utilize social media to help increase awareness of public health issues and National Public Health Week during the month of April. The Health Department's Facebook page will be updated frequently with posts that offer tips on a variety of public health issues and also highlight some of the programs available at the Health Department. For additional information on programs and services offered, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit the Health Department's website at www.lasallecountyil.gov. # # #



MEDIA RELEASE



Date: April 21, 2025
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“LaSalle County Health Department Launches Free Residential Sharps Disposal Program for Residents”

OTTAWA, IL – LaSalle County Health Department is launching the Residential Sharps Disposal Program to provide residents with a free and easy way to dispose of medical needles. This program is funded through a grant received from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) Residential Sharps Collection Program. The sharps disposal program aims to make sharps disposal easy and accessible for our county residents. The initial launch provides two (2) 24 hour accessible drop off kiosk locations in the County:

- **LaSalle County Health Department**

717 E. Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

- **LaSalle County Forensic Center**

520 West Walnut St.
Oglesby, IL 61348

(These kiosks will accept standard Sharps containers. This program will not accept sharps from businesses.)

How the Program Works

- ✓ **Pick up a Free Sharps Container**

Residents may pick up sharps collection containers by visiting the LaSalle County Health Department (8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) or the LaSalle County Forensic Center (8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.), Monday through Friday.

- ✓ **Securing the Sharps Container**

The sharps containers are quart size and can hold about 36 one cc syringes, the most common needle size. Residents should insert the sharps point-first into the container and secure the lid.

- ✓ **Disposing the Sharps**

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Residents may dispose of the sealed sharps container at either kiosk at their convenience. If you are using a personal container and your container does not fit into the kiosk, please drop off your secured container at LaSalle County Health Department during normal business hours. Both the sharp container and disposal are free to residents, and no appointment is necessary.

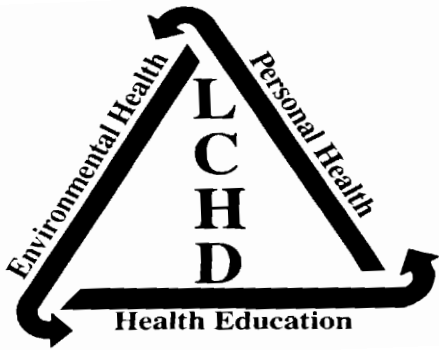
For questions, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or the LaSalle County Forensic Center at 815-434-8268.

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www.lasallecountyil.gov

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: May 1, 2025

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)

Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“Health Department Begins Vector Surveillance”

Ottawa, IL – There will be a slight change in the way the LaSalle County Health Department conducts their vector surveillance program for the 2025 season (May 1 through October 15, 2025). The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has notified all local health departments that the collection of dead birds for West Nile virus testing will not be conducted due to the ongoing H5N1 avian influenza outbreak. Therefore, the LaSalle County Health Department will not be collecting dead birds as part of the vector surveillance program during this time frame. Reports of five or more dead birds found in LaSalle County during this time frame should be made to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) District Wildlife Biologist for LaSalle County by calling (779) 702-8274 or call the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Wildlife Services, at 1-866-487-3297 to determine if domesticated bird samples should be collected for testing.

How do I dispose of dead birds on my property?

Given the concern regarding influenza in wild birds (especially waterfowl, aquatic birds, and birds of prey), the following are tips to reduce the risk of avian influenza spreading to people who may need to pick up dead birds on their property. While it is unlikely that handling dead birds would lead to human infection, it is best to be cautious. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends specific Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) when around dead birds. In the case of not having that PPE, the following guidance can be used:

1. Don't use bare hands to pick up a dead bird or animal.
2. Use disposable waterproof gloves and/or an inverted plastic bag to pick up the dead bird(s). Double the plastic bag with the bird(s) inside and dispose in the trash where it cannot be accessed by children or animals.
3. After handling a bird, avoid touching your face with gloved or unwashed hands.
4. After the bird(s) are disposed of, take gloves off first and put into a plastic bag for disposal.
5. Wash hands with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.

If you should develop flu-like symptoms within ten days of disposing of a group of dead birds, contact the LaSalle County Health Department. For additional information on disposal of dead birds, please visit:

[IDPH Safe Dead Bird Disposal \(Less than 5 Birds\)](#)

[Safe Dead Bird Disposal \(5 or more Birds\)](#)

Mosquito Collection and Testing

As in prior years, Health Department staff are getting ready to begin testing mosquitoes for West Nile virus. The mosquito collection and testing equipment were purchased with grant money. Testing will begin once the weather stays consistently warm and will continue through the fall months. Multiple mosquito collection sites are utilized and they are typically moved throughout the county during the surveillance season. Collected mosquitoes are placed in a freezer to inactivate and then they are sorted out for testing. The female *Culex pipiens* (common house mosquito) are the only mosquitoes tested, as they bite for blood meals. The Health Department will report any positive mosquito batches to the public.

Larvicide Distribution

The Health Department also utilizes grant money to purchase a large quantity of mosquito larvicide, which is used to treat potential mosquito breeding sites. The larvicide will be distributed to licensed mosquito control applicators from local municipalities and villages throughout the county.

Additionally, the Health Department, through a grant, offers larvicide to property owners looking to reduce mosquito breeding sites. Property owners are encouraged to pick up a package of NATULAR® DT. NATULAR® DT, is a mosquito larvicide that controls larvae of mosquitoes for up to 60 days. Manufactured by Clarke, Natular® DT is an easy-to-use, bi-layer tablet that prevents mosquito breeding in standing water sites around yards. The larvicide can be picked up at the Health Department (717 Etna Rd. Ottawa –8:00 a.m.-4:30p.m.). Each package contains 12 tablets. At this time, **supplies are limited to one per household.**

For additional information on West Nile virus, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov.

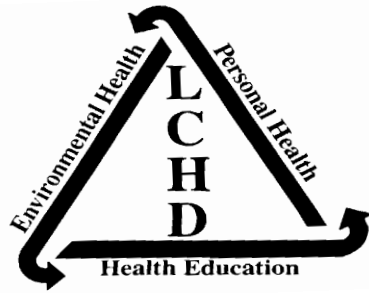


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www.twitter.com/LaSalleCoHealth

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: May 2, 2025

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)

Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"May is Lyme Disease Awareness Month"

OTTAWA – In observance of Lyme Disease Awareness month and the warmer weather our area has been experiencing, it's important to take precautions against tick bites and the illnesses they can carry. Illnesses like Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Lyme disease, Tularemia, and Ehrlichiosis can cause mild symptoms or severe infections. In LaSalle County, Lyme disease is the tick-related illness seen most commonly. There were 11 cases of Lyme disease confirmed in the county in 2024.

YEAR	NUMBER OF HUMAN CASES
2018	4
2019	8
2020	5
2021	2
2022	4
2023	14
2024	11

Lyme disease is caused by bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi* and rarely, *Borrelia mayonii*. Lyme disease is transmitted to humans through the bite of infected blacklegged ticks. The risk of exposure to ticks is greatest in the woods and in the edge area between lawns and woods; however, ticks can also be carried by animals onto lawns and gardens and into houses by pets. Campers, hikers, outdoor workers, and others may be exposed to infected ticks in wooded, brushy, and grassy places. People who spend time in heavily wooded areas where infected ticks are common are at higher risk for exposure.

"There has been a noticeable increase in the number of Lyme Disease cases in LaSalle County over the last two years. The greatest risk of being bitten exists in the spring, summer, and fall. Apply an EPA-registered insect repellent when spending time outdoors. Additionally, wear closed-toed shoes and light-colored clothing so you can see ticks on your clothing. When hiking, stay on the center of trails, avoiding wooded and brushy areas with high grass. After spending time in areas where ticks could be found, everyone should conduct a thorough tick-check on themselves, their children and their pets. Removing ticks within a 24-hour period reduces the risk of potential disease transmission. Talk to your doctor if you

-More-

have been bitten by a tick and experience fever, chills, muscle and joint aches, or a rash,” says Jennifer Arroyo, Director of Environmental Health at LaSalle County Health Department.

Simple tips to avoid tick exposure include:

- Wear light-colored clothing to make ticks easier to find. Tuck long pants into socks and boots.
- Apply an EPA-registered insect repellent containing 20% DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus according to label directions.
- Use products that contain permethrin to treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and sleeping tents. Or look for clothing pre-treated with permethrin.
- Walk in the center of trails. Avoid wooded, bushy areas with high grass and leaf litter.
- Conduct full-body tick checks on family members (underarms, ears, belly button, behind knees, between legs, waist, hair and scalp) every two to three hours. Also check any gear or pets taken on outings.
- Put your clothes in the dryer on high for 10 minutes (or one hour for damp clothes) to kill ticks.
- Bathe or shower within two hours after coming indoors.
- If you find a tick on yourself, it is often helpful to keep the tick for species identification. Place the tick in rubbing alcohol or in a sealed bag/container to bring to your healthcare provider or local health department for submission to IDPH. A submission form can be found on the [IDPH website](#).

If you find a tick attached to your skin, there's no need to panic. Remove the tick as soon as possible to reduce your chances of getting an infection from the tick bite. The CDC recommends the following steps to remove a tick:

1. Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible.
2. Pull upward with steady, even pressure to remove the tick. Avoid twisting or jerking. If the mouthparts remain in the skin, leave them alone. In most cases, they will fall out in a few days.

Don't use nail polish, petroleum jelly, or a hot match to make the tick detach.

3. Clean the bite area and your hands with rubbing alcohol or soap and water.

If you become ill with a fever and/or rash after being in an area where ticks may be, please contact your health care provider. The most common symptoms of tick-related illnesses can include fever, chills, aches, pains, and rash (not in all cases). Early recognition and treatment of the infection decreases the risk of serious complications.

For additional information, please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit their website at www.lasallecountyil.gov. Also, please visit the Illinois Department of Public Health's (IDPH) interactive tick surveillance map created by their Vector Control staff. The map shows what ticks have been identified in Illinois by county.

<https://idph.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=976061db733441eb977ef5cf2facd5c4>



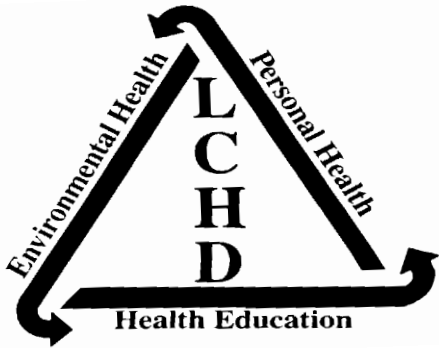
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www.twitter.com/LaSalleCoHealth

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: May 28, 2025
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“World No Tobacco Day”

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department would like to announce that Saturday, May 31st is World No Tobacco Day. The ultimate goal of this year's campaign is to contribute to protecting present and future generations not only from the devastating health consequences due to tobacco, but also from the social, environmental and economic detriments of tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke. The tobacco industry addicts more than over 2,000 youth everyday and one in three of them will die prematurely because of tobacco. And while millions of people are dying, Big Tobacco is raking in billions and billions of dollars.

The LaSalle County Health Department would like to encourage everyone to join in on the campaign against smoking, which is the most preventable cause of death in the United States today. Over 480,000 deaths annually in the U.S. are directly related to smoking according to the American Cancer Society. One of every five deaths is attributed to the effects of smoking.

Now is the time to quit smoking. The Illinois Department of Public Health has a Tobacco Quitline that you can call for help. The number is 1-866 Quit-Yes that's 1-866-784-8937. For more information on how to quit smoking, or for some quit tips you can also call the Health Department (815) 433-3366. You can also visit our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov or like us on facebook and X.

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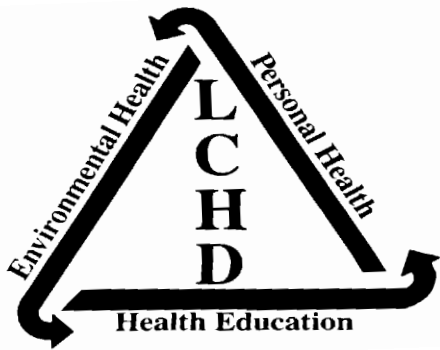
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www.twitter.com/LaSalleCoHealth

www.lasallecounty.org

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: June 23, 2025

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext. 4314) or Jenny Barrie (ext. 4315)

Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS, contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 433-3366.

Ottawa, IL – June 27 is National HIV Testing Day, an annual occasion to encourage people to get an HIV test. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that everyone between the ages of 13 and 64 get tested for HIV at least once as part of routine health care. People at higher risk should get tested more often. The goal of the campaign is to identify people who don't know they are HIV positive so they can access treatment. LaSalle County Health Department offers low- cost rapid HIV finger stick tests and encourage interested individuals to come on June 27th between 9:00 am – 3:00pm. Appointments are strongly recommended to ensure adequate staffing. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), currently almost 40 percent of people with HIV are not diagnosed until they already have developed AIDS. That can be up to 10 years after they have become infected with HIV. In the United States, nearly 1.2 million people are living with HIV, and about 13 percent of them don't know it and need testing.

While we have made tremendous strides in treating HIV disease and related infections, those advances mean little to someone who doesn't know they are infected. If you have ever had unprotected sex with someone who uses injectable drugs, if you have ever shared needles, if you are a man who has ever had sex with another man, or if you have other factors that put you at risk for HIV infection, you should consider getting an HIV test. Today more tools than ever are available to prevent HIV. In addition to limiting your number of sexual partners, never sharing needles and using condoms correctly and consistently, you can reduce your risk.

To learn more information about HIV, contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366. You can also access our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov, or like us on Facebook/X.

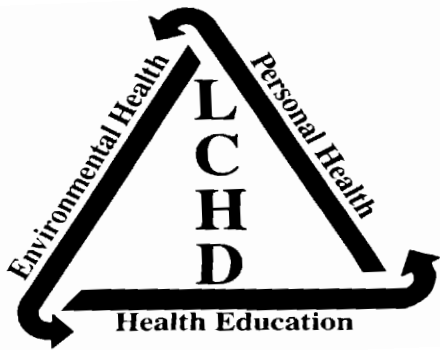


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www.lasallecountyil.gov

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: July 23, 2025
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus”

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Marseilles tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected on July 22nd and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department. This is the first documented West Nile virus activity in LaSalle County this year. According to Jennifer Arroyo, Director of Environmental Health, “this is the time of year we expect to see West Nile virus activity increase. The rain we have experienced recently could contribute to areas of standing water and mosquito breeding. It is important to wear your insect repellent, especially during the evening hours, to help prevent illness.”

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a *Culex* mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including paralysis, meningitis or encephalitis (i.e. brain and nerve infections), or even death. People older than 60 and those with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for severe illness.

IDPH urges the public to *Fight the Bite* by practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel, and report:

- **REDUCE** - make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

-More-

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecountyil.gov under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance>

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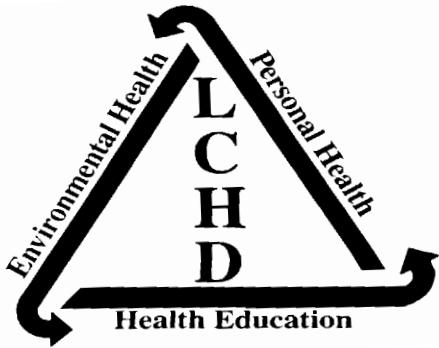
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www.lasallecountyil.gov

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 1, 2025
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext.74314)
Leslie Dougherty (ext.74315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“National Breastfeeding Month”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

FOR INFORMATION OR INTERVIEWS; contact Leslie Dougherty or Jenny Barrie at 433-3366.

OTTAWA, IL— August is National Breastfeeding Promotion Month. LaSalle County Health Department along with medical authorities, including the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists support and encourage all new mothers to embrace breastfeeding as the preferred method of infant feeding for the first year of life. Illinois’ Breastfeeding initiative helps focus on the lifelong benefits of breastfeeding for both mother and infant. Research is clear that breastfeeding is the optimal nutrition and the perfect life-sustaining food for babies. Breastfeeding provides both nutritional and non-nutritional benefits to the infant and mother.

Breast milk is the basic foundation for infant nutrition for the first year of life. It also provides many benefits to the mother as well by helping to protect against breast and ovarian cancers, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and weak bones later in life. Another benefit worth mentioning is that it also helps the mother get to her pre-pregnancy shape faster.

Breastfeeding also allows you and your baby to get closer- physically and emotionally. So while your child is feeding, the bond between you can grow stronger. All the while you will be helping to protect your baby from medical conditions from mild to severe, such as ear infections, gastro-intestinal problems, to childhood cancers and many other conditions. According to the AAP breastfeeding is also associated with a reduction in sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Babies are born expecting to breastfeed! However, there is a “learning curve” for mother and baby as they initiate breastfeeding. This is a key opportunity for friends and family to provide support to the new mom. Expert professional support and education is also available if needed.

-MORE-

Practice the ABC's of Breastfeeding.

- A – Awareness to when your baby is showing signs of needing to feed and responding to those cues.
- B – Be patient and allow your baby to guide you on the journey in the early days of breastfeeding. Unlike formula feeding which is typically more scheduled, breastfeeding is driven by the baby's demand.
- C – Comfort. The more comfortable and relaxed the mom is, the more enjoyable feedings will be.

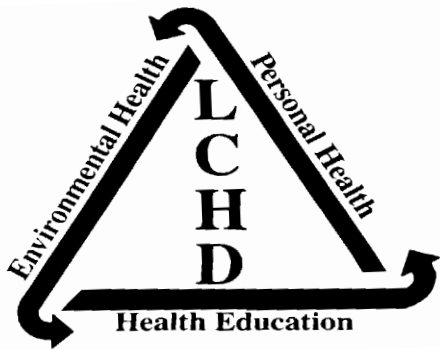
In addition there are things that fathers can do to support breastfeeding. They can provide support to the mother and make sure she feels comfortable. Encourage her to breastfeed. Learn about breastfeeding and how it works. Learn what the hunger cues of the baby are. Attend breastfeeding classes. Help with other tasks around the house, and bond with the baby when they are not being breastfed.

Breastfeeding for any amount of time benefits both moms and babies. We congratulate all breastfeeding moms on making this choice! For more information on breastfeeding you can contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 433-3366.

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 14, 2025

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)

Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus”

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from LaSalle tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected earlier this week and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department. This is the second documented West Nile virus activity in LaSalle County this year. In July, mosquitoes collected from Marseilles tested positive for the virus.

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a *Culex* mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including paralysis, meningitis or encephalitis (i.e. brain and nerve infections), or even death. People older than 60 and those with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for severe illness.

IDPH urges the public to *Fight the Bite* by practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel, and report:

- **REDUCE** - make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce

mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecountyil.gov under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillanceq>

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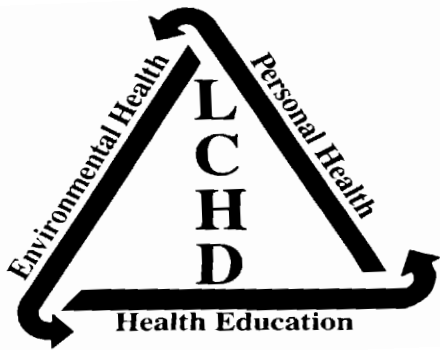
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www.lasallecountyil.gov

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 19, 2025

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)

Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“Additional Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus”

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Ottawa tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected on August 18th and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department.

To date, the following West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes has been documented for 2025:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Date Collected</u>	<u>Animal/Insect</u>
MARSEILLES	7/22/2025	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	08/13/2025	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	8/18//2025	MOSQUITOES

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a *Culex* mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including paralysis, meningitis or encephalitis (i.e. brain and nerve infections), or even death. People older than 60 and those with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for severe illness.

IDPH urges the public to *Fight the Bite* by practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel, and report:

- **REDUCE** - make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can

breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.

- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecountyil.gov under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillanceq>
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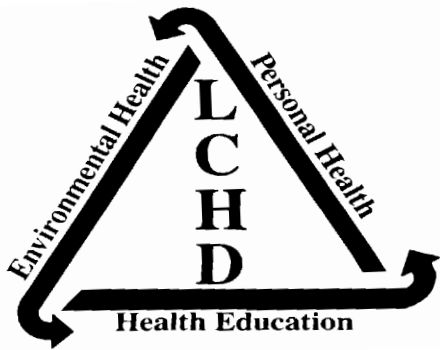
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www.lasallecountyil.gov

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 21, 2025
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“31st Annual Food Service Seminar”

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department will be sponsoring their Thirty-First Annual Food Service Seminar on September 8, 2025. The seminar will be held at Senica’s Oak Ridge, Rt. 6, LaSalle. Everyone is welcome to attend. Registration is from 8:00 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. The seminar will begin at 8:30 a.m. and will conclude at approximately 4:30 p.m. The day will consist of speakers from Quik-Kill Pest Eliminators, Inc., Performance Food Service -Thoms Proestler (PFG), Peoria City/County Health Department, LaSalle County Health Department, Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Cintas Corporation, and OSF Healthcare.

Topics include:

- Pest control
- Chemical hazards and safety in the food service industry
- Public health emergencies in a food establishment
- History of food safety
- Service animals and food establishments,
- IDPH program updates
- Plumbing in food establishments
- First Aid/Life Vac
- Norovirus

September is National Food Safety Education Month. It provides an opportunity to raise awareness about steps that can be taken to prevent food poisoning. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that annually, 48 million people in the U.S. – roughly one in six Americans –

-more-

contract some form of foodborne illness, resulting in symptoms that can include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, cramping, fever, and chills. Of those cases, 128,000 lead to hospitalization, and an estimated 3,000 deaths annually are attributed to foodborne illness.

Foodborne illness is preventable when you follow the basic safety guidelines – clean, separate, cook, and chill:

- Clean: Wash your hands, utensils, and surfaces often when you cook.
- Separate: Raw meat, turkey, chicken, seafood, and eggs can spread germs. Separate them from cooked food and fresh produce.
- Cook: Use a food thermometer to make sure foods are cooked to an internal temperature that kills germs.
- Chill: Refrigerate perishable foods (foods likely to spoil or go bad quickly) and leftovers within 2 hours, or within 1 hour if the food is exposed to temperatures above 90°F (like a hot car or summer picnic).

For more information about National Food Safety Education Month, visit the CDC website at

https://www.cdc.gov/food-safety/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/education-month.html. To

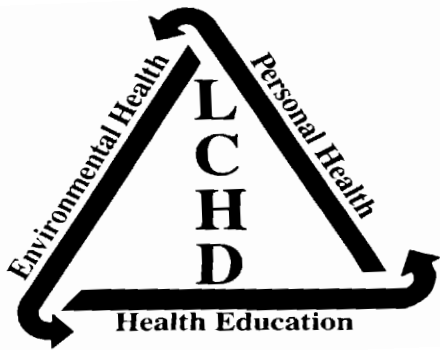
pre-register for the food service seminar, please call the LaSalle County Health Department at (815) 433-3366 or visit www.lasallecountyil.gov.

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: August 27, 2025
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“Mosquitoes in Oglesby and Streator Test Positive for West Nile virus”

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Oglesby and Streator tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected late last week and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department. Late summer and early fall are common times to see West Nile virus activity increase.

To date, the following West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes has been documented for 2025:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Date Collected</u>	<u>Animal/Insect</u>
MARSEILLES	7/22/2025	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	08/13/2025	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	8/18//2025	MOSQUITOES
OGLESBY	8/22/2025	MOSQUITOES
STREATOR	8/22/2025	MOSQUITOES

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a *Culex* mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including paralysis, meningitis or encephalitis (i.e. brain and nerve infections), or even death. People older than 60 and those with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for severe illness.

IDPH urges the public to *Fight the Bite* by practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel, and report:

- **REDUCE** - make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecountyil.gov under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillance>

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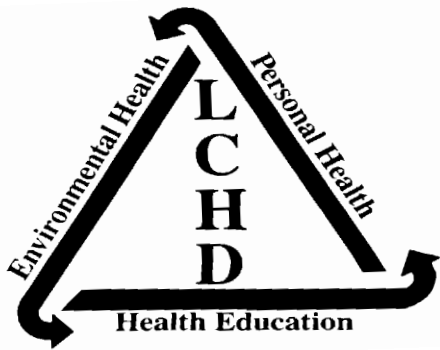
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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: September 3, 2025

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)

Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“Mosquitoes in Seneca Test Positive for West Nile virus”

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Seneca tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected on September 2nd and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department. Late summer and early fall are common times to see West Nile virus activity increase.

To date, the following West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes has been documented for 2025:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Date Collected</u>	<u>Animal/Insect</u>
MARSEILLES	7/22/2025	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	08/13/2025	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	8/18//2025	MOSQUITOES
OGLESBY	8/22/2025	MOSQUITOES
STREATOR	8/22/2025	MOSQUITOES
SENECA	9/2/25	MOSQUITOES

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a *Culex* mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including paralysis, meningitis or encephalitis (i.e. brain and nerve infections), or even death. People older than 60 and those with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for severe illness.

IDPH urges the public to *Fight the Bite* by practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel, and report:

- **REDUCE** - make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department's web site at www.lasallecountyil.gov under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health's web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus>

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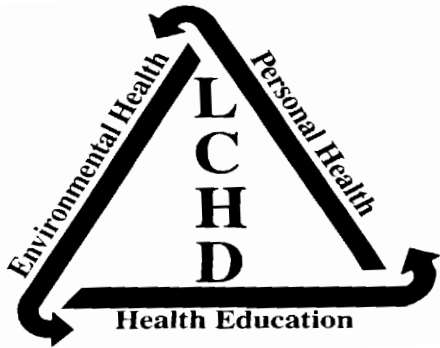
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www.lasallecountyil.gov

MEDIA RELEASE



Date: September 4, 2025
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

"September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month"

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department would like announce that September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month in Illinois. Ovarian cancer is the fifth leading cause of cancer deaths in women in the United States and causes more deaths than any other gynecological cancer. In the United States, a woman's lifetime risk of being diagnosed with ovarian cancer is about one in 78. The American Cancer Society estimates 20,890 cases of Ovarian cancer will be newly diagnosed in 2025 and 12,730 individuals will die from the disease nationwide, including 770 new cases and 410 deaths in Illinois.

Ovarian cancer is difficult to diagnose and is often called a "silent disease" because early symptoms can be vague and easily overlooked. Common signs include:

- Bloating or a feeling of fullness
- Abdominal or pelvic pain or pressure
- Frequent or urgent urination
- Persistent, unusual fatigue
- Persistent gastrointestinal issues (gas, nausea, indigestion)
- Unexplained weight gain or loss

Risk factors or factors that can increase the risk of developing ovarian cancer include:

- Increasing age
- Inherited gene mutations, such as BRCA1 and BRCA2
- A history of breast or bowel cancer
- Endometriosis
- Never having been pregnant
- Starting menstruation at a young age or going through menopause at an older age

Knowing your family history and telling your doctor about any unusual symptoms you may be experiencing is the best way to detect ovarian cancer early. For more information about ovarian cancer and our Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov.

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MEDIA RELEASE

Date: September 10, 2025

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)

Phone: (815) 433-3366

For Immediate Release

"LaSalle County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) – Volunteer Recruitment"

Ottawa, IL - Looking for a way to become more involved and give back to your community? In note of September being Emergency Preparedness Month, learn more about the LaSalle County Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). The MRC is a national network of volunteers who help make their communities stronger and healthier during disasters, and every day. MRC programs are organized into community-based units that work to improve local emergency response capabilities, reduce potential public health risk/vulnerabilities, and build community preparedness and resilience.

Do MRC volunteers need to have a medical or public health background? No, the specific role a volunteer plays will depend on their background, interests, skills, as well as the needs of the MRC unit and community. A well-balanced MRC unit will include medical and public health professionals, as well as other community members without healthcare backgrounds who wish to donate their time and expertise. MRC volunteers regularly contribute to community preparedness (ex. Naloxone training and community vaccination clinics) while also preparing to respond to natural disasters, emergencies, and disease outbreaks. MRC volunteers supplement existing local emergency and public health resources.

Local health, safety, and preparedness begins with you. For more information about the MRC and becoming a volunteer, please contact Monica Strzalkowski at the LaSalle County Health Department. Monica can be reached at 815-433-3366 or mstrzalkowski@lasallecountyil.gov.

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: September 19, 2025

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)

Phone: (815) 433-3366

For Immediate Release

“Additional Mosquitoes Test Positive for West Nile virus”

Ottawa, IL – The LaSalle County Health Department received confirmation that mosquitoes from Dayton and Naplate tested positive for West Nile virus. The mosquitoes were collected on September 16th and 17th and Environmental Health staff conducted the confirmatory test on the mosquitoes at the Health Department. Late summer and early fall are common times to see West Nile virus activity increase.

To date, the following West Nile virus activity in mosquitoes has been documented for 2025:

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>Date Collected</u>	<u>Animal/Insect</u>
MARSEILLES	7/22/2025	MOSQUITOES
LASALLE	08/13/2025	MOSQUITOES
OTTAWA	8/18//2025	MOSQUITOES
OGLESBY	8/22/2025	MOSQUITOES
STREATOR	8/22/2025	MOSQUITOES
SENECA	9/2/2025	MOSQUITOES
DAYTON	9/16/25	MOSQUITOES
NAPLATE	9/17/25	MOSQUITOES

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a *Culex* mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including paralysis, meningitis or encephalitis (i.e. brain and nerve

infections), or even death. People older than 60 and those with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for severe illness.

IDPH urges the public to *Fight the Bite* by practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel, and report:

- **REDUCE** - make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department’s web site at www.lasallecountyil.gov under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health’s web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus>

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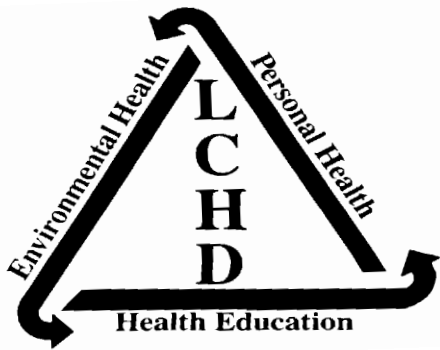
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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: October 2, 2025

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ex 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ex 74315)

Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month”

OTTAWA, IL – October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in women other than skin cancer, and is the second leading cause of cancer deaths for women. The good news is that most women can survive breast cancer if it is found and treated early.

A mammogram – the screening test for breast cancer – can help find breast cancer early when it is easier to treat. Low-income women and women with no insurance die from breast and cervical cancer more often than other women. These high mortality rates are attributed in part to the fact that these women generally do not receive regular mammograms and Pap smears. As a result, cancers are diagnosed at later stages when it is more difficult to treat and the chances for survival are less.

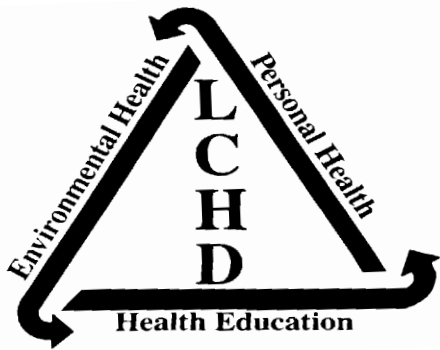
LaSalle County Health Department, through our Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP) grant, can pay for mammograms and Pap smears for women who qualify. You may qualify if you are a LaSalle or Grundy County resident between the ages of 21-64 for breast and cervical cancer screenings. Through IBCCP, LaSalle County Health Department is working to increase breast and cervical cancer awareness and break that cycle of late-stage treatment. IBCCP provides FREE mammograms and Pap smears for those women who qualify and assistance with paying their deductible for those who are insured. Take advantage of this opportunity for early detection. You are important to your family.

Call (815) 433-3366 for further information on how to receive a free mammogram and Pap test.

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: October 6, 2025
To: All Media
From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
Contact: Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)
Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314)
Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“Walk-In Flu Vaccination Available this Week – No Appointment Needed”

Ottawa, IL - The LaSalle County Health Department is offering flu vaccines available beginning October 8th, daily from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm. The Health Department is located at 717 Etna Rd., Ottawa

Seasonal Influenza Vaccine and Influenza HD (High Dose) Vaccine for persons 65 and older are available. In addition, VFC (Vaccine for Children) Flu vaccine is available. This would be for children 6 months through 18 years of age who have Medicaid or who have no insurance.

All LaSalle County Health Department influenza vaccines are preservative free. The fee for the seasonal flu shot will be \$25. The fee for influenza High Dose will be \$70.

You must have your insurance card and a Photo ID with you. No Doctor’s order is required. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

If you are still in need of a COVID-19 vaccination, it is safe to receive the flu vaccine and a COVID-19 vaccine at the same time. **However, all COVID-19 vaccinations must be scheduled. Please call the Health Department at 815-433-3366 to make an appointment.** The Health Department strongly encourages everyone who is eligible to receive their flu vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine to ensure everyone is protected as they possibly can be as we head into cold and flu season.

To lessen your chances of developing the flu, adults and children need to practice good hygiene measures. Teach the importance of covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing, and educate children about hand to mucous membrane transmission. One of the best ways to protect yourself and your children is through frequent and thorough hand washing. People who are exhibiting “flu-like” symptoms should stay home from work, out of childcare and school to minimize transmission.

Remember the 3 C’s: clean, cover, and contain:

- Clean** –frequently wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- Cover** –cover your cough and sneeze.
- Contain** –contain your germs by staying home if you are sick.

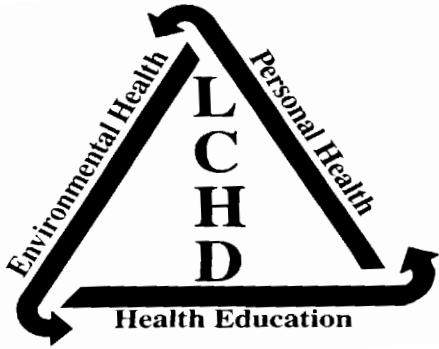
-More-

For additional information please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 815-433-3366 or visit our website at www.lasallecounty.org.

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: November 13, 2025

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ext. 74314) or Jenny Barrie (ext. 74315)

Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“Health Department Confirms First Case of West Nile Virus”

Ottawa, IL – LaSalle County Health Department has confirmed its first human case of West Nile virus this year. A resident in their 60’s tested positive for West Nile virus. Human West Nile virus cases were previously reported in LaSalle County:

Year	Number of Human Cases
2018	1*
2017	1
2016	1
2014	1
2013	1
2007	2
2006	1
2005	1
2004	5
2003	1
2002	11

*First human case and death

Additionally, this summer and fall, mosquitoes tested positive for the virus throughout the county.

According to Jennifer Arroyo, Director of Environmental Health, “the confirmation of a human case in the late fall is not surprising due to the prolonged warmer temperatures we experienced

-more-

this season. However, with temperatures dropping below freezing in recent weeks, mosquito activity has come to a close and the risk of contracting West Nile virus is very low. As we look forward to the spring season and warmer weather in 2026, it is important to remember the best way to protect yourself against illness is to wear insect repellent and to get rid of any stagnant water around your home to reduce the number of mosquitoes.”

West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a *Culex* mosquito, commonly called a house mosquito, that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Common symptoms include fever, nausea, headache and muscle aches. Symptoms may last from a few days to a few weeks. Most people infected with West Nile virus will not show any symptoms; however, in rare cases it can lead to severe illness including paralysis, meningitis or encephalitis (i.e. brain and nerve infections), or even death. People older than 60 and those with weakened immune systems are at highest risk for severe illness.

IDPH urges the public to *Fight the Bite* by practicing the three “R’s” – reduce, repel, and report:

- **REDUCE** - make sure doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or other openings. Try to keep doors and windows shut. Eliminate, or refresh each week, all sources of standing water where mosquitoes can breed, including water in bird baths, ponds, flowerpots, wading pools, old tires, and any other containers.
- **REPEL** - when outdoors, wear shoes and socks, long pants and a light-colored, long-sleeved shirt, and apply an EPA-registered insect repellent that contains DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, IR 3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone according to label instructions. Consult a physician before using repellents on infants.
- **REPORT** – report locations where you see water sitting stagnant for more than a week such as roadside ditches, flooded yards, and similar locations that may produce mosquitoes. The local health department or city government may be able to add larvicide to the water, which will kill any mosquito larvae.

A complete listing of West Nile virus statistics for LaSalle County is available on the Health Department’s web site at www.lasallecountyil.gov under Environmental Health/Vector Control. A state-wide listing is available at the Illinois Department of Public Health’s web site at <https://dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/west-nile-virus/surveillanceq>

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MEDIA RELEASE



Date: November 17, 2025

To: All Media

From: LaSalle County Health Department
717 Etna Road
Ottawa, IL 61350

Contact: Leslie Dougherty (ex.74314) or Jenny Barrie (ex.74315)

Phone: (815) 433-3366
For Immediate Release

“GREAT AMERICAN SMOKE OUT”

OTTAWA, IL -- This year the Great American Smoke Out is Thursday, November 20th. The Great American Smoke Out is sponsored by the American Cancer Society (ACS) and celebrated the third Thursday each November. This annual event challenges smokers to quit for at least 1 day with the hopes that they will quit permanently.

The LaSalle County Health Department would like to encourage everyone to join in on the campaign against smoking, which is the most preventable cause of death in the United States today. Smoking is associated with increased risk for cancers of the mouth, nasal cavities, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, liver, cervix, kidney, bladder, and myeloid leukemia. And yet according to the CDC about 28.8 million Americans still smoke. Quitting smoking is not easy, and it's not a matter of willpower. The nicotine in tobacco is addictive, and that's what makes quitting so hard. The good news is we know more than ever before about what works best to help people quit.

The Great American Smoke Out is more than a reminder of the dangers smoking poses to your health. It's a call to act. The Great American Smoke Out is an upbeat effort to encourage smokers to give up cigarettes for 24 hours, if only to prove to themselves that they can. No matter your age, or how long you've been smoking, quitting improves health both immediately

and over the long term. Some long-term benefits include reduced risk for heart disease and certain cancers. For help in trying to quit you can contact the Illinois Department of Public Health's Quit line at 1-866-QUIT-YES that's 1-866-784-8937. Every day thousands are leaving the pack behind. Now it is your turn to do the same. For more information on how to quit smoking or for some quit tips please contact the LaSalle County Health Department at 433-3366, or visit our website at www.lasallecountyil.gov.

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